

Pte. Kenneth Walter Foster.                      Memoir

MEMOIRS OF THE GREAT WAR 1915 - 1918

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In the early part of 1915 I was operating an elevator in one of the larger buildings in the city of Victoria, British Columbia, for which I received the enormous sum of seven dollars per week, six of which went home to help feed the multitude (eleven all told) the remaining one being kept for myself. At this time the War was just getting underway very nicely and although we were thousands of miles from the battle fields of France there were many incidents which told us there was a terrific crisis going on over there.

It was in April of 1915 that the good ship "Lusitania" was torpedoed by a German submarine and many persons lost their lives and a lot of ill feeling was created amongst the people of Victoria against the German element residing there; for no sooner had the so-called victory been made known when they began celebrating on behalf of their fellow-countrymen, a very foolish thing to do for the troops stationed there were very indignant over the affair and proved that such a thing was quite out of order by raiding and putting them out of business forever.

It was now my one ambition to join up right away so that I could get to France before the war was over, so I went to the recruiting station and offered by services to my country and to help right a great wrong which we believe had been done by the War Lords of the warring nations. I was then seventeen years of age and was doubtful whether I would be accepted, being under age. My doubts were confirmed, for after passing the "Medical Officer" I was turned down for being under age, much to my sorrow. But I was determined to go, so a few days after I returned much the same as before, but a year older. This time my efforts were a success for I was taken on and attached to the 50th Gordon Highlanders. And what a struggle I had to get those umpteen yards of kilt on the right way! I shall never forget it; and how chilly it was too. And believe me, I was some proud Kiltie when I finally got everything hooked on. It was an old saying later that we were just made to hang things on anyway.

I did my first sentry-go the very next night, with a feeling of importance mixed with nervousness and sleepiness; in fact, it was one of the longest two hours I had ever spent.

For the next two months we did nothing but drill, with an occasional turn at "Cook house" fatigue; that was peeling spuds, washing dishes, etc., a novelty at first which we soon became tired of.

In June I was transferred to the 62nd Battalion and sent to the training camp at Vernon, B. C., where several Battalions were in training. This camp was all under canvas, which was something new, as our previous one was composed of buildings. Here we were given a more strenuous training, long route marches with full pack, along dusty roads, and the thermometer reading around 90 in the shade, but we did not seem to mind that part of it for we knew we were on our way.

In the latter part of August volunteers were called for draft of a hundred men to be sent to England, of which I was one. Before going I was given six days leave to visit the folks at home. It took too days to get there so that only left me two days to spend at home, not very long when one has to say goodbye, perhaps for good; however, fate brought me back, whether for better or for worse remains to be seen.

Well, the time came when I gathered my belongings, said "goodbye" to the folks and my friends, but alas! I had left it a little late, for when I arrived at the depot the boat was just pulling out. I just stood there not knowing what to do, for I knew only too well that if I was late getting back the draft would be gone and I had visions of being court-martialed with a crime of desertion against me. However, I noticed a well-known clergyman amongst the crowd whom I knew, so I asked him to write a letter for me to the commander to the affect that I had missed the boat and would therefore be a day late. Naturally I was quite put out over the unfortunate incident, and there was nothing left for me to do but go back home and start again the following day. That night was the last time that I had the pleasure of sleeping in a real bed for almost two years. The following day I left in plenty of time so there would be no danger of repeating yesterday's performance, and finally did get away, without feeling the least bit homesick. Odd? Well, rather. The boat trip of four hours to Vancouver was always interesting to me, provided of course that the water was on its best behaviour, for I am a good sailor in port. Arriving in Vancouver about 8 P.M. we found the troop train already waiting for us. The trip to Vernon took only twenty-four hours and it seemed that no sooner had we got nicely settled when we had to dis-embark, having reached destination. Naturally, my first thoughts were--had the draft gone without me? But on reaching the camp I was told that it had not, but was scheduled to pull out the next day.

And so it was on the 26th of September, 1915, that I actually started on my long journey for parts unknown. The "Fall-in" was sounded and after saying goodbye to some of the boys we paraded for the final inspection by the Commanding Officer of the Battalion--to assure himself that everything was in order before we departed. That done, we headed for the station which was not more than a mile from camp. Twenty minutes later we arrived and were herded into the waiting cars with a shout of "Are we down-hearted? NO!" The train moved slowly with it's human freight and we were actually on our way.

What a wonderful six days! I shall never forget them. The first day took us through the "Rockies", but unfortunately we did not see very much of them as that part of the country was traveled by night. The next was taken up mostly with Alberta. The reception we got from the people at the different stopping places was such as never to be forgotten by all we boys who traveled across Canada in those dark War days. The time did not go slowly, I can tell you, for there was always lots to see; poker games were very much in evidence and a crown and anchor board was going strong in almost every car. One or two places the train was side-tracked when we were given a little exercise in the form of a route march through some small town just so we would not lose our appetites. These marches always created considerable excitement amongst the town-folk, who looked with eager eyes for someone they might know. Often friendships were renewed in this way.

Through Saskatchewan and Manitoba harvest operations were in full swing and it was indeed difficult to realise that not so many miles away, "over there" a war was on--for how long, no one could tell.

And the thing that worried most of the boys was "would we get there before it was all over?" Had we knows that it was going on for so long perhaps we would not have been quite so anxious.

At last we were at Montreal where we were to leave the train for the more dangerous part of the journey across the Atlantic, where German Submarines were always on the look-out for a victim. It was not long before we filed out of the train, marched down to the docks and on to the boat; the "Scandinavian", which was to paddle us across the pond. For hours it seemed troops were being crammed into that old hull until its sides seemed to bulge with the weight of its human cargo. All corners filled, the gangway was taken in, the hawsers let loose, and once more we were away. Down the St. Lawrence River we went,--a happier bunch of boys you never would see. The meals dished out to us here were not quite as good as those on the train, although not too bad considering the great number on board. We slept in hammocks, on tables, on deck--in

fact anywhere and everywhere. I spent a good deal of my time on deck, for the weather was getting a little rough now, and the meals did not seem to interest me at all. Two days out from England we were met by two destroyers which escorted us for the remainder of the trip, and without being torpedoed we duly arrived at Portsmouth, thus finishing the second leg of our journey.

Here again, the trains were ready waiting for us. It was indeed surprising to note that very little waiting was encountered considering the number of troops that were being handled each and every day. What odd looking trains they were too, with their numerous doors, so unlike our Canadian trains; we could not help laughing at them, they looked for all the world like toy ones; the novelty was unique.

So on the 10th day of October we experienced our first train ride in England. And believe me--they sure could travel for the size of them. We arrived at our destination about 8 o'clock in the evening at the village of Hazelmere, in the county of Hampshire. It was raining hard when we got off the train. I remember only too well how we were stalled at the station for an hour or more, for there seemed to be some mis-understanding as to where the camp at Bramshot really was. Eventually we got away, and after a march of about two miles we arrived there, tired, wet and hungry; so after partaking of a little nourishment we all hit the floor, and although it was mighty hard we soon fell asleep.

On awakening the next morning I found the camp to be large, with hundreds of huts capable of housing from forty to fifty men---a regular war village with Post Office, stores, theatre, etc., like hundreds of others which were scattered all over different parts of the British Isles.

Our training here consisted mostly of long route marches, plenty of drill, and the usual turn at guard. During our stay here I went to several villages and towns in Hampshire; for instance, Grayshot, Godalming, Guilford and others, the names of which I have forgotten. But our stay here was very short indeed for at the end of five weeks we packed up and were sent to Sandling, near Folkstone where we were to join the 48th Battalion, also from Victoria. Here we started some real training and it certainly looked more business-like to us. The following are extracts from letters which I had sent home while in training here and which were published in the Daily Colonist of Victoria, as follows:--

"BASE COMPANY OF 62nd BATTALION QUARANTINED" Pte. Kenneth Foster writes of experiences before leaving for France -- Battalion movements in England. Following are extracts from letters

received by Mr. Walter Foster from his son Pte. Kenneth Foster, who was formerly a member of the 50th Gordon Highlanders, and who left here a year ago at the age of seventeen years for overseas service, leaving British Columbia with a draft from the 62nd Battalion, last September. Ken Foster was a Victoria Boy Scout for some five years before enlisting, and two brothers are in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Writing from St. Martins Plains, he says:--Feb. 8th. Received your letter today along with the four others --but what an awfully long time it was coming; I guess the reason is that all Canadian mail is quarantined. We have now been quarantined for five weeks, and you can guess how we feel about it, with sentries all around us. The last few days we have been making hurdles. These are wicker-work screens, averaging ten feet by six feet and are used for placing in the trenches to keep the walls from caving in, also for the floors. We are getting quite expert at building trenches. Tomorrow, we are going bomb throwing; it is quite exciting. They make a noise just like a blast. The quarantine may be lifted this Saturday. We have a pretty good idea that we are going away shortly now.

Feb. 14th. I should call our hut very unlucky. Another case of measles has broken out, which means another sixteen days. Well, I guess the worst is yet to come. Our captain brought us in a gramophone tonight, that makes it a little more cheerful. Nothing new today. Bombing and mining in the afternoon. This morning we had a bath.

March 1st. The Battalion is going Friday or Saturday, but as we are still quarantined, we shall follow when it is lifted. The pioneers are turning in all their extra kit. Tomorrow we go to a wood about four miles away, to cut down trees for the construction of dug-outs.

March 30th. You will notice we have moved again. They keep moving us around all the time. I have had it pretty tough this week. Went on guard Sunday and am still on. Of course there is no chance of getting any sleep. I suppose you have heard of the big storm we have had here, the worst for 50 years. Well, I was on guard at the Folkstone waterworks, and, believe me, I was pretty near all in. I just forget how many people were killed, it was an awful lot. Hundreds of trees were uprooted and sent crashing through houses. The Battalion has had a number of casualties already, and I hear there is a draft going over next week, which is good news, as I come first on the list. Since the Battalion went away everything in upside down. The 62nd is at Bramshott where we first went.

April 16th, 1916. You will notice that I have been moved again, having been transferred to the 10th Brigade Machine Gun

Company. I was really glad to get out of the Base Company. There are two of the old boys with me. After completing a three weeks course at the school here I will go to an advanced school for two more weeks, and then over to France. Sir Sam inspected 40,000 Canadians last Monday. The Pioneers were among them and about 12 were decorated with the D.C.M. The 48th is having a hot time of it, having made a charge on their own, and getting cut up rather badly. Did you hear of the Zep. we brought down? It caused lots of excitement--all the lights went out.

April 22nd. J. B. (He was killer later) and I went to Folkstone yesterday, and had a ripping time. Got our pictures taken also. Coming back we missed the train, which made us half an hour late and we are consequently up for orderly room tomorrow. As it is our first offence we may be let off, but we should worry. The 62nd boys are having a tough time of it, not having had any grub since they got here. Many of them are in the hospital. They have been in barracks for three or four months, and have now been put under canvas, which along with the climate may account for the sickness. I have not had one day's sickness since I left Vernon, and have gained 20 pounds. Now weight 165 pounds. You can put it down to scientific feeding.

I like this Machine Gun School fine. I don't wish to peddle it too strong, but I hold the record here for blindfold "stripping and assembling a gun". I am going to Napier Barracks next week to finish the course, and then over to France. I hope my pay book was sent to London to be balanced and I have \$65.00 to my credit up to and including February.

The letters you have just read will give some little idea of the kind of training we were going through during our sojourn in England. At that time I must have been anxious to get to France, as you will have noticed by the letters; however, most of the rumors about going over seemed to prove "false alarms" for on going back to that particular time I find that it was some six weeks before I finally did get away. The stripping and assembling of a "Lewis Machine Gun" blindfolded was a very important factor for a Machine Gunner, enabling him to make repairs at night. It certainly came in useful to me later.

We were now stationed at "Napier Barracks", which was located only a short distance from Folkstone, Kent. They were more substantial than any other place I had hitherto been to, being build of brick, regular peace-time barracks, reminding me more of a prison than anything else; however, being merely a temporary home, it did not matter very much what it was, for there was plenty of amusement; almost every night we journeyed to Folkstone.

The good news comes at last, ten of the best "Gunners" are preparing to re-inforce some unknown Battalion in France, This was in the latter part of June, 1916. Sailing from Folkestone we crossed the Channel and after two hours of ups and downs we duly arrived at "La Havre, France". The day was hot and the roads were dusty and the camp proved to be about five miles from La Havre. Although a comparatively short distance it seemed as though we would never get to our destination, due no doubt to the excessive heat and the extra heavy equipment which we were then carrying. Finally we arrived at the camp, tired but happy. Here there were hundreds of tents which made up the base camp where we were about to take our final training before proceeding up the line. The accommodation here was limited, which made it necessary to put from thirty to forty men in each tent. The training ground was a mile from camp and was made to resemble the front line as much as possible. Each day we would go up to the "Bull Ring", as it was known, and do our stuff, which consisted of:--Bayonet fighting, bomb throwing, open warfare and the use of the gas mask (a crude affair to what we had later) in a dug-out filled with one of the most deadly gasses used at that time. If we came out of this ordeal without any ill-effects the Gas-Mask was all right. Some of the boys would come out looking quite ghastly, but they soon recovered on emerging from the gas chamber. This training went on for some time. About the middle of July we were given the final once over and certified O.K.

The next thing was to get our emergency "First Aid Kit" and "Iron Rations". The latter consisted of one tin of "Bully Beef" and two or three "Hard Tack" to be used in case of emergency only. The next morning we pulled out according to schedule.

We arrived at the station expecting to see a string of Pullmans waiting for us like we had been used to in England and Canada, instead, we were introduced to a string of "Box Cars" (the Ancient Variety) with the words "40 Homs or 8 Cheveux" inscribed thereon, which in English, means 40 men or 8 horses. I have a sneaking idea that the 8 horses would have been more comfortable than was our luck, for it was necessary that we lie spoon fashion in order to obtain a little shut-eye; then the end man would give the signal and every one would turn together.

I never saw anything as slow as those French trains, for it took us three days to cover 200 miles to our destination, which I learned on our arrival was "Popperinge" near "Ypres". It was dark when we unplied ourselves, so I was unable to determine just how far from the front line we were, but I figured it was not so very far away for the guns could be heard quite distinctly and the

flashes were plainly visible. The order un-pile was given, and we proceeded on our way to "Scottish Lines" which was about six miles behind the lines. It was 12.30 A.M. when we crawled in. And now for a little lunch and a few hours sleep thought I, but no such luck. No sooner had we got nicely settled down, when the Sergeant Major appeared on the scene with orders that we prepare for a trip to the front line at once.

And so it was after a very scanty repast we sallied forth in single file, perhaps never to return; who could tell? For two miles or more the going was not too bad, just a wagon road with shell holes scattered here and there, and up till now I was holding my own, five or six from the front or leading man. The pace however, proved to be too fast for me and I began to fall back towards the rear, but fortunately the order was given for a halt and once more I was in my original position. Surveying my surroundings I discovered that we had stopped in a small village that had been subjected to a very severe attack of shell fire, which had reduced it to a complete state of ruins. A few walls were all that remained, which stood out against the sky-line like phantoms. I thought to myself that if whole cities were treated with so much disrespect, what could we expect? Here my thoughts were interrupted with the order "Fall In" and once more we were on the move.

Passing through the village we left the main road and followed a trail across country. Here the going was much more difficult, so that it was with some effort that I was able to keep in touch with the man in front of me and it was not long before I had lost sight of the rest of the boys completely. Then the S.O.S. would be heard--"Cut off in Rear". Other well-known phrases were, "Wire under Foot", "Shell Hole to the Right" and "How Much Further". For an answer to the latter we invariably got this "It won't be Long Now", so that there was nothing else for it but to lean on our chin straps.

So far things were fairly quiet except for an occasional gun or two which could be heard in the distance. Then there was a blinding flash and roar. My steel lid went one way and I went the other. I just lay there wondering which part of me was hurt the most. The Sergeant, realizing something was wrong, called a halt and came to the rear. When he saw me stretched out on mother earth, naturally he wanted to know what ailed me. I said, "That one landed pretty close, didn't it?" "That one didn't land at all," he said, "It went." It was one of our own shells and what he told me was not exactly what a parson would say. With that, I picked myself up, and we proceeded.

Several things told me we were getting close to the



"Line". The aroma of dead bodies was strong on the night air. The rattle of machine guns and the Very Lights sounded quite close now. In fact, they seemed to be all around us, this being due to the formation of the line, which was known as "Ypres Salient" or better known to us as "Hill 60". It was more like Hell 60.

Here we entered a railway cut which I learned later was used as support lines and not more than half a kilometer from the front line. The 4th Battalion were billeted here in dug-outs along the cut. After parking here for fifteen minutes we entered a communication trench which led right to the front line. Needless to say, there was considerable water in the trench, which was overcome by "duck-boards" placed 18 inches or so above the bottom of the trench. Sometimes the water would get a little higher than usual, then the boards would float. That would mean wet feet and naughty words. Of course one could walk overland in preference to the trench. That practice, however was not encouraged, because Fritz had a bad habit of sweeping the country with machine guns during the night.

And so it was, after thirteen months of training I arrived in the line of the famous "Hill 60". Officially transferred to the Machine Gun Section of the Second Canadian Battalion. My initiation took place that morning, for no sooner had I located my "dug-out" and was comfortably settled for a little well-earned rest, when Fritz sent over a flock of "Minnenwerfers" as an official greeting. Anyway one of them buried itself adjacent to my "Stucco Bungalow" and with a loud report, the thing went off, partly demolishing my temporary home and putting me out of action for a few minutes. However, after getting dug out (I was half-buried) I was soon back to normal.

That was my first experience of actual shell fire, an every day occurrence, I was told later, and practically nothing to what was in store for me. Quite enough for me though.

I was indeed glad when daylight came, because things invariably quietened down at that time. Also for the daily rum issue, about two tablespoonsful. Then came breakfast. It was brought up the night before and consisted of bread and cooked bacon (three men to a loaf). These things were brought up in sacks, so that it was necessary to spend some time removing vast quantities of said sack, before it was in a fit condition to

consume. The tea came up in four-gallon oil cans and invariably tasted of different varieties of oil, with very little milk, if any. Otherwise it tasted all right. Other articles on the menu consisted of -- "Blackberry and Apple Jam," Hard Tack, Bully Beef and occasionally a small portion of cheese, if we were lucky. Then would begin the arduous task of warming the bacon and tea, with the aid of a piece of rag and candle shavings or anything that would create a little heat, with the minimum amount of smoke. That ordeal over, some of us were permitted to pipe down for a few hours shut-eye.

So making myself as comfortable as possible, I laid down on the hard ground, and being exceptionally tired I was soon in the land of dreams. It was not long however, before I was rudely awakened by two inconsiderate young rats, who were playing tag around my head,--enormous thing they were, overfed by the size of them. That put me off sleep for the rest of the day. It was a beautiful sunny morning so I decided to crawl out of my hole and get acquainted with my new surroundings. There was, however, very little to be seen. Just one mass of trenches which were in a very sad state of disrepair. Shells had actually leveled them off in some places. Not wishing to have a hold drilled in my skull I ventured not across those death traps during the day time, for they were invariably marked by "Hun" snipers, who, in most cases used explosive bullets. Turning back I came to one of the boys on duty, to whom I introduced myself. He asked me what I thought of the lay-out. I said it didn't impress me very much, not very healthy for one thing and too darned hot for another. "Oh," said he, "You will soon get used to such small details; wait till you've been here as long as I have. Those are merely two of the unpleasant little obstacles which we have to contend with during our sojourn in this God-forsaken place." A shell landing altogether too close to suit me finished our conversation as far as I was concerned. It was back to the dug-out for me and a little shut-eye if possible. It was, for I slept soundly all day.

It was dusk when I was finally aroused from my sweet dreams by the platoon Sergeant, with a "Snap out of it, young feller!" He then informed me that I was detailed to go out with the ration party that night. So, after taking on a little fuel, I reported to Company headquarters, where seven more of the boys were already waiting. Two from each platoon. As it was not yet dark we were told to go down below and have a smoke before leaving.

Headquarters were usually fortunate enough to park themselves in a deep dug-out, far away from harm, but not down on the farm. These were from twenty to thirty feet deep. But for all that they were far from being bomb-proof. Cigarettes

out, we made our way to the communication trench, the same one we had travelled the night before. Except for the continual rattle of machine guns, an occasional Very light, the old whiz-bang swishing by, the stench of dead bodies and our own silence, one would hardly realize that there was such a thing as a war going on.

The ration dump was, I should judge, about two kilometres from the front line. Here rations and ammunition were brought from the railhead by the Battalion Transport if there was no light railway in the vicinity. Whenever possible the dump was located near a Crucifix. There is one to be found in every French village, and in nine cases out of ten they would be practically undamaged, no matter how severe the shell fire had been. A mere coincidence perhaps, but, one never can tell.

Arriving at the dump it was a simple matter to grab a couple of sacks containing the following articles, Bread, Cheese, Jam, Cooked Bacon or Beef, Cigarettes and Tobacco (perhaps). Tied together they were easily carried over the shoulder, or as an alternative, two four-gallon cans of water or cold tea. I usually steered clear of the latter because they were devilish awkward things to carry. The most important sack of all was that containing the mail and the Rum jar. Needless to say the N.C.O. in charge attended to the latter. I have often thought since what a wonderful system of distribution it was to feed an army in time of war. To my way of thinking, it was nothing short of a miracle.

Well, let's get back to Headquarters while things are comparatively quiet. Fritz may decide to strafe us on very short notice and for no apparent reason. Ration parties were his favorite meat. However, we arrived back all right about 2 A.M. and then joined our respective platoons, where we stood to till daylight appeared.

Looking over the top during my first night on the firing step, I saw all kind of funny things. Staring into so much black nothingness I would see an object, which, after a few minutes, would move cautiously towards me, and not wishing to raise any unnecessary alarm I asked my partner if he saw something moving about in front. No, he said he couldn't see anything. Must be that old tree stump you see. Even then I was not convinced. So to prove it and set my mind at rest, he fired a Very Light. Sure enough, there was the remains of a tree which had been snapped off by a shell. I felt more easy now and was wondering what I would have done had it been a whole flock of Germans after my blood. This time I saw and heard it. Something was crawling right in front of me, it was about the size of a dog. Instantly I had one hand on my Lee Enfield and the other one

grabbed a Mills Bomb, when my Buddy casually remarked that there were an unusual amount of rats around the last few nights. And once more my pulse went back to normal. I was indeed relieved when the first sign of dawn finally appeared. Then for a rum issue, a bite to eat and then to my dug-out for four hours. The routine for the day was, two hours on duty and four off.

At the end of three days the Battalion was relieved and sent back for a couple of days rest, where I had my first wash and incidentally a bath. Already a great number of "Cooties" had made their habitation in my underwear, so that a delousing operation was absolutely necessary in order to enjoy a little peace.

It was a grand and glorious feeling to be able to walk around on deck so to speak, with the knowledge that there were no "Hun" snipers looking for my scalp. The only possible danger now was from the French Mademoiselles. But, being somewhat backward where the women were concerned, I was comparatively safe from that danger zone. And yet, for all my armour plate against such a calamity I almost fell.

Here the Battalion was billeted right amongst the French people, in their homes, in barns, in fact, anywhere and everywhere there were troops; every available space was occupied. They, the French people, certainly had a lot to contend with those days, more than the rest of the world realized, and in most cases they did all that they possibly could for us, even to the extent of supplying eggs and chips at two francs per head. Also, they did an enormous trade in beer and wine, which could be obtained anywhere and anytime. Their children were brought up on beer, and they seemed to thrive on it too.

Our present location was a village (I forget the name) not far from "Poperhinge", five or six miles from the front line, if I should judge correctly, far enough away to feel comparatively safe from the Hun and his dirty tricks. It was, however, a common occurrence for the odd shell to come sailing over and land unceremoniously in different parts of the village, regardless of the women and children who still stayed by the ship. How many were killed will never be known. I can vouch for some who paid the extreme penalty for remaining in their own homes. I don't suppose they had anywhere else to go had they wanted to. All is fair in Love and War though.

Our sojourn here lasted for three days, when I learned that the Battalion was not to return to the Salient, but was to move South at once, where, no one knew, no one ever did know, it was always go, and keep on going until told to halt, never knowing from one day to the next where our destination would be -- what

a life!

So the following morning, after an early breakfast we were on the road for parts unknown. It was a wonderful morning (to go swimming) with the clearest of skies, and everybody seemed happy, including myself, some singing, some whistling; and some of the boys were dropping out with sore feet, for the cobblestoned roads were extra hard on one's motive power. The sun too, was blazing down unmercifully, I was getting a little groggy myself, but managed to hold on till the next hourly halt of ten minutes was made. Fall in, and off again. If ever time travelled it was then, during those ten minutes, just like greased lightning if there is such a thing. If any of you ladies are overweight and wish to reduce, put on a full pack such as we used, about 70 lbs. Then march for a whole day on hard bobble-stones, in the middle of July.

Northern France, as I remember it, was not exceptionally hilly, so that most of our marching was done on the level. Had such a War been staged in British Columbia it would have been a much different story.

At "Cassel" we made a stop for lunch. That was indeed music unto my ears, for, already my shoulders were aching quite a bit and my feet were beginning to drag. It was not long then before I had my harness off and my mess tin out. And now for a raid on the "Cook House". It always followed in rear of the Battalion, the cooking behind done on the road. This ordeal over I laid down to take "Five", but alas, no sooner had I dozed off when the "Fall-in" sounded and once more we were on the move. The first half hour after lunch was always the most difficult part of any day's march.

At last, after the very first all day march with full pack we arrived at our billets for the night. This particular village had been selected by the "Billeting Party" which composed of an officer and one man from each company provided with bicycles (lucky dogs), who would then detail so many men to each house, whether the occupants liked it or not. They would then mark the number of men and their respective Company on the door of said house or barn, whichever it might be. In this manner the Battalion was distributed all through the town, and in most cases all available space was occupied. If the parking space was not sufficient in one place, half the Battalion would go on to the next place. Then half that stayed would have the laugh on the other half. But the joke was reversed the following morning when "Reveille" was sounded, for the half that went on had another hour to dream. But, as I said once before, all is fair in love and war.

Day after day this went on. Kilometre after kilometre, we ate them, but mostly in the form of dust. Sometimes we would travel by motor lorries and sometimes by train, or freight cars to be exact, which traveled at the speed of sixty miles per hour-- perhaps. But owing to the War, the speed was reduced to about twelve knots an hour so the boys could run alongside for exercise.

My longest day's march was from seven in the morning till eleven-thirty at night, when we covered approximately forty-five kilometres. After which we boarded one of the afore-mentioned over-land limited. I was too tired that night to do or think of anything but sleep and sleep I did. The hard floors or the jerking of the cars was no barrier to the sand-man. When I awoke the sun was already up and most of the boys had, by this time, broken their fast. I did likewise. Bully beef and hard tack was on the menu that morning and every other morning for the next few days. This mode of travel was hardly in the pullman class, but was a decided advantage to that of wearing down cobble-stones.

The next leg of our journey was made via motor lorries. It was even worse than the former method, so that any one with a weak heart was surely due for an attack. Riding a camels hump in a bathing suit would have been duck soup compared to some of those trucks. However, we all survived the trip and it didn't cost us anything either.

Back to the daily grind one more, wearing down the roads of France with a number ten army boot. It won't be long now though, for we are headed toward the scene of action. In the distance can be seen some of our observation balloons, as yet mere specks, but growing larger every hour.

Two more days march brought us to the town of "Albert" on the "Somme" and incidentally our final destination after three weeks on the road. A fairly large place that bore mute evidence of the War, with scarcely a building that had not been hit by shells and deserted except for the troops billeted there. The church, a large one, was damaged beyond repair, on the top of which stood a figure of the "Virgin Mary", hanging at right angles. It was generally supposed that if it ever fell Germany would be victorious. Whether it remained in that position or not, I could not say.

The Battalion remained here for two or three days, so that we might check over our equipment, ammunition, emergency rations, etc., before proceeding to the "Line". I must say that the prospect of staying here any longer than was absolutely necessary did not appeal to me at all because Fritz was shelling the town day and night. Therefore it was with some relief that we

received orders to pack up.

And it came to pass that we relieved an Australian outfit on the last day of August 1916. Our position lay directly in front of "Albert" at what was once known as "Pozières", and what was now only a few piles of bricks, so severe had been the shell fire in this vicinity. Nothing was left standing, so that the only protection we had were cellars where houses had once stood. I never saw a more complete attempt at annihilation, in fact it was a first-class job. I thought to myself, here's where we come in for some dirty work. My assumption proved to be correct before many days had passed.

For four days we held the fort here, under a continual rain of shells, causing quite a number of casualties amongst the Battalion. Sleep, to any great extent, was practically out of the question in such a hold as this was, when minutes seemed like hours, and hours dragged by like days. It was quite evident that men could not stand the pressure under these conditions for any length of time.

On the morning of the fifth we were relieved by the Fourth Battalion. A fact which made me truly thankful and, I have to admit that I had plenty during those four days. My second baptism of fire and still I lived to tell the tale.

It was no wonder that "Fritz" was sore in this sector, because there had been a big allied offensive during July and August when the line was advanced some five to six miles, so that continual counter-attacks were being launched in a final effort to recapture some of the lost ground, all of which, however, proved to be unsuccessful.

Our quarters now were located in ex-German dug-outs. Deep? I'll say they were, with beds, tables, chairs, etc. In fact, comfort was the Huns first consideration. It was not long then, under those conditions before we caught up on sleep. After that came the delousing operation, of which there were numerous methods. I shall not discuss them at this time, but will be glad to do so on request.

The following incident is one that I shall never forget, because it concerned one of my best friends. Four of us had gone forth this morning on a tour of inspection through death valley. Souvenir hunting was the true nature of our expedition. Mathews was his name, and he had me on edge all the time. He would pick up "duds" and attempt to remove the nose-cap, foolish boy, considering that he knew nothing about them and there were four reasons why he should leave them alone. I was one of them. Any-

way, he decided that discretion was the road to take for a long life and left it alone.

Our wanderings led up into all sorts of queer places, one being an enormous crater which the British had blown on the German front lines, just previous to the attack. Here whole companies of Huns had been blown to pieces, many of them being buried alive. Death Valley was indeed an appropriate name for this graveyard. Rifles, ammunition of all kinds, equipment and helmets were scattered everywhere, including human arms and legs, yes, and even heads.

By this time we had been rambling around for two hours or more, when someone suggested we go back to our quarters if we intended horning in on the "chow" lone. So in single file we climbed out of the crater and headed for home. We had been going for about fifteen minutes, when something exploded directly behind me, with a loud report. Instantly I looked around (I was third man) and through the cloud of black smoke I saw Mathews, who was in the rear. He was lying on his back. I went and told him to get up, but he did not move. The others by this time had come back to see what was wrong, but my fears were already aroused, for there was a scarlet spot on the side of his head, just above the left ear. I felt his pulse and found he was dead. Killed by his own hands. It was a sad trio that walked into headquarters that afternoon with the dead body of one, who, not long before, was full of life.

The accident occurred in this manner. Mathews had evidently picked up a German rifle grenade at the crater, though none of us noticed that he had it. Anyway, he must have decided not to keep it and evidently threw it away and being a percussion type it was detonated on contact with the ground. Fate did the rest. I was indeed lucky that I did not meet the same fate, for I was not more than ten or twelve feet away. So much for that little outing.

Mathews was buried with full military honors not far from the place where he met his tragic end. I might say at this time that my one great ambition is to visit the old battlefield in France, where poppies now grow on the graves of those who gave their lives for the sake of humanity. Some day my hopes may be realised. One can never tell.

On the night of the eighth we journeyed once more to the "front line", this time to the accompaniment of Tanks and Artillery. Evidently there was going to be a show, and very soon too. Everything was moving toward the front line that night, just one mass of men and machinery. Guns were lined up wheel to wheel.



The Battalion was located in the same place as before. Arriving there about three in the morning we were told to get some sleep if possible before the show started at zero hour, which was so far an unknown quantity. All the next day we kept low, resembling a flock of ground hogs more than human beings. If "Fritz" had got wind of the number of men that were ready to pounce on him, it would have been complete annihilation for us. Evidently he did not, for it was exceptionally quiet during the day.

At four in the afternoon we took up our position at the jumping off trench and without exaggerating, the boys were shoulder to shoulder, just one mass of humanity waiting to be slaughtered. A snort of rum all round and we were all ready to go. It is almost impossible to describe the feeling I experienced while waiting to "go over"--the suspense was terrible. I was shaking as though I had an attack of "St. Vitus' Dance". That condition, however, deserted me when the artillery barrage opened up at four-forty and exactly at four-forty five on the afternoon of the ninth of September, 1916, we went "Over the top" at Pozieres on the Somme front --an incidentally my first trip over and my last for some time.

Four outstanding features were characteristic of the 2nd Battalion attack on the 9th; It being the first time that Tanks were used successfully. It was the first daylight attack ever attempted on a fairly large scale. The first Canadian V.C. for 1916 was awarded to Private Leo Clark at that time, and it was the first time that an official "Movie Man" cranked away at his camera thus securing the first actual pictures of Canadian Infantry in action. I witnessed this unusual procedure as shells burst all around him.

I learned later what actually took place on that September afternoon. From the beginning the 2nd Battalion ran into considerable opposition. The Artillery had not effected a destruction of the enemy defenses to the extent hoped for, with the result that no sooner had the boys jumped the bags than they faced a savage rifle and machine gun fire. The first waves melted--the succeeding ones fared little better. The men dropped into shell holes and returned the enemy's fusilade, working their way over "no man's land" in the usual short rushes. The advance was slow and costly, but gradually we obtained superiority of fire and with a bound the heroic remnants of the Battalion covered the last few yards, thereby gaining their objective, which was a salient a little over a quarter of a mile long held by the enemy and giving them observation over the back country in the rear of the British lines, which had to be taken before preparations for the offensive of September the 26th could be completed.

I was number three on the Colt Gun, or in other words,

spare parts carrier. Number two carried the tripod, number one the gun, and the remainder carried ammunition. We climbed the parapet and made for a shell hold not more than twenty yards away, set up the gun and commenced firing. No sooner had it started when it stopped, when King, who was number one, was hit in the arm by a piece of shrapnel from a shell that landed nearby and practically severed his arm. Unfortunately he died later from loss of blood. Patterson, who was number two, promptly took his place at the gun and commenced firing. Five minutes later he got his with a bullet through the hand. I was the next victim. Apparently we were there for the sole purpose of being shot at. So taking my place at the gun I started firing at the only target I could see through the dense smoke, which was a number of the enemy, who were evidently standing on the firing-step of their trench. I had overcome my nervousness by this time and things were going along very nicely until--the gun must have got too hot (it was air-cooled) and it stopped. I tried with all the speed I could to get it in action again, but without success. I had worked on it for about ten minutes when I happened to glance toward the German lines and just at that moment I got mine, with a bullet through the left shoulder.

Odd though it may seem, I saw the fellow who plugged me. He was about two hundred yards away and if I'm any judge it was a good shot from that distance. Had it been a fraction of an inch to one side I would have been pushing up daisies now. Later I found out that the bullet had grazed the collar bone, tipped a lung, scarred the main jugular vein, put a groove in my spine, and finally came to rest in a can of beans which I had in a small haversack on my back. So that my first actual time in action only lasted fifteen minutes.

How long I lay in that shell-hole I could not say, as I was out for the count of ten and then some. When I first came back to life some one was dragging me back to the trench. My legs were so numb I did not know whether they were still with me or not. The thought of being paralyzed was a little too much for me, I passed out again.

The next time that I "came to" was just before dark. I was then laying in a cubby hole with my legs stretched out in the middle of the trench. I have a hazy recollection of Hun prisoners stepping over me with their hands high in the air and they were saying "nix good". Then I started coughing and spitting blood. Of course I didn't know just where I was hit, not the nature of the wound, so that the sight of blood coming from that quarter spelled nothing but a peaceful death to me. From then on I was in a sort of semi-conscious condition, with only a hazy recollection of what took place after that.

When I finally regained consciousness it was ten o'clock the following morning, that was on a Sunday and exactly seventeen hours after I got hit. I was then carried out to the nearest field dressing station which was located in a cellar on the main road to Albert. On my arrival there I was dumped unceremoniously on the floor, which was by now filled with wounded, or it may have been a morgue for all I knew. I could hear the stretcher bearers talking with someone, it was possibly the M.O. and this is what I heard: "Is he badly hit?" "Yes, sir, a serious case--been out all night--can't get far in that condition." Cheerful, was it not? Anyway they bandaged me up and gave me a drink of water and then left me till the ambulance arrived.

I was put aboard some time during the afternoon. What a ride that was to be sure. Could I ever forget it? It was two horse power, with the springs all dried up. The roads were dotted with shell holed and the driver hit every one of them. In fact I was buffeted about like a trans-Atlantic air-plane. My wound was paining considerably by now, every bump increasing the agony. All that could be heard from inside was, "Ouch, have a heart". It was now that I lost what little respect that I had for the Huns, when he started shelling the ambulance. Would we ever get out? I was beginning to wonder if we would ever do so alive. Some of them were landing too close to suit me, by the CRUMP, CRUMP, CRUMP, which could be distinctly heard above the rumble of the wheels on the cobble-stones. I shall refer to this trip as the "Agony ride through death valley".

At last we arrived at Albert much the worse for wear, but without any further casualties, where I was placed in one of the clearing stations nearby. And from there further back to field hospital which was under canvas. Here I stayed till about the end of September. Lying in bed I remember listening to the bombardment of the twenty-sixth when "Regina Trench" and "The Sugar Refinery" were taken at Courcellette. I was told that our attack on the ninth was successful, also that it was the first daylight attack ever made up till that time. This was a regular death chamber for there was hardly a night that someone did not pass out.

My once paralyzed legs were by now almost back to normal, a fact that cheered me up considerably.

My next move was to the base hospital at Rouon, where I stayed for a few days before proceeding across the channel to Blighty.

On my arrival at Southampton I was asked what part of England I preferred to go to. As a matter of fact, owing to the condition which I was in, my destination did not concern me in the least. Anyway, I said drop me off at the first place we come to. It was

London I was thinking of.

An ambulance train passing through a town always created considerable excitement, for no matter where we stopped there would always be a large crowd at the station to greet us. I was fortunate in securing a lower berth, so that I had a fairly good view of the surrounding country. That gave me the feeling that I was glad to be alive. The ambulance trains were a hundred per cent comfort and a great contrast compared to the agony ride along the Albert Road three weeks ago. In fact I enjoyed this trip so much that I was almost sorry when we reached our destination which was Chester, in the county of Cheshire, and incidentally one of the oldest towns in England. Parts of the wall which once surrounded it are still standing. It also contains several very old churches.

Ten of us were eventually carried on stretchers and deposited on the station platform, where we waited in a drizzling rain for fifteen or twenty minutes. Here the people asked me all kinds of questions. Where I was hit, how old I was, where my home was and others too numerous to mention.

It won't be long now though, for the motor ambulance arrived, and once more I was freighted to some unknown destination. What a life of uncertainty. Where to now? thought I.

Half an hours ride brought us to the hospital which was an old skating rink before the war and located on the top of a hill, in a small "Burg" called Frodsham, also in Cheshire.

It was not long before the nurse (a cute little blond) had me washed, ironed, dried and between the sheets. Almost too good too be true. Then cocoa and something to eat for the other part of me. It was a grand and glorious feeling, I'll tell the universe. I can't say whether I slept very much the first night or not. I have a faint recollection of someone holding me hand or perhaps that was only a dream. There were other nights though when it was no dream. But 'nuf said about that.

When morning arrived I discovered that my new home was much better than a lot of others I had been in. The ward was very well lighted with oodles of windows. It contained fifty beds and all of them were occupied.

This was a V.A.D. Hospital and maintained by the people of the village who supplied all the eatables. The nurses gave their services "Free Gratis". A great deal of credit was due them for the good work they did during those doubtful and trying days. I, for one, shall never forget the attention given me at Frodsham Hospital during the five months that I was a patient there.

It was only now that I learned the true nature of my wound, which was not so serious as I had at first thought, but painful nevertheless, especially when being dressed, which was done twice a day. Two months or more had elapsed before I was acquainted with the exact location of my wound, and by that time I was well on the road to recovery.

A good many concerts were given, which afforded us many pleasant hours. It was in hospital, after becoming an up-patient, that I learned to play billiards. I am reminded at this time of a very amusing though painful incident that occurred the first day that I got up. I was going down to the main dining room when one of the boys (evidently glad of the event) slapped me on the back with a glad-to-see-you-up-sort-of-feeling. The result was another knock-out. However, after a few minutes I was none the worse for the unexpected outburst of enthusiasm on behalf of a fellow patient.

I had been up about two weeks, when I decided, with the aid of a walking stick, to venture forth into the village which was a mile and a half from the hospital. It was down hill most of the way which made the going comparatively easy. On reaching the village the first thing I spied was a "Tea Room" which I entered and partook of a little nourishment and a much needed rest. The return trip was not quite so easy, for the half mile hill proved to be quite an obstacle which retarded my progress and wind pressure considerable. However, I arrived back none the worse for the experience, with a severe reprimand from the nurse for going to far.

I must say that the days from then on went altogether too fast to suit me. There was one other Canadian there besides myself. I think there was too much fuss made over us by the nurses, two of them in particular. Many pleasant hours the four of us spent together, roaming the nearby woods, etc. In fact it was beginning to get serious with me. A case of love a first sight, but on second thoughts--I took another look.

In February 1917 I was examined and pronounced fit to leave the hospital for the convalescent camp. So reluctantly I said goodbye to the nurses and boys whom I had become intimately acquainted with, and then took my departure for Liverpool where I stayed for two weeks before proceeding to Epsom which had been converted into a convalescent camp.

Here I underwent a light course of Physical Training so that at the end of six weeks I was in fairly good shape. My first and only black mark was scored against me there (I should have had more) and that was an oversight on the part of the Officer in

charge. We had to be in barracks by nine o'clock those days, but one night I was marked absent, with the result that I was awarded two days C.B. But the injustice of it was that I was in my bunk all the time.

There was plenty of amusement at Epsom, with concerts, picture shows or the odd poker game and Crown and Anchor. The two latter were excellent methods of relieving one of his spare shillings. But what did it matter? I would win one night only to lose the next. It was the same with us. Snatched from the hands of the grim reaper one time and then sent back again to all the horrors of war, perhaps never to return. Fortunately fate dealt me a good hand, so that things turned out fairly good for me. I must confess that I have become quite a fatalist since those days.

Hastings was my next point of interest and one of the most picturesque seaport towns in the south of England. My sojourn here only lasted for about two weeks and then on again to Seaford.

Back to huts again. That was enough to make a parson swear. After sleeping in real beds it required some effort to go back to those conditions again. In fact it was just like starting all over, with the familiar kit inspections, drilling, bayonet fighting, etc. -- I was fed up with all that stuff.

It was here that I met my brother Alan. He was a bugler in the 103rd Battalion, a mere kid at that time, not more than fifteen years of age. He and I had some great times together while we were in Seaford. Besides doing his stuff on the bugle, he was also assistant manager of the camp Theatre.

Seaford under ordinary conditions may have been a very nice place to live in, but during the war it was just an ordinary seaside village with a strong odor of fish and overflowing with troops, where the people charges us two shilling and sixpence for fish and chips, a price unheard of in pre-War days. They were real profiteers. However, the price did not prevent us from enjoying a mess of them one or twice a week.

It was here that I almost met my Waterloo by the hands of an old woman, who approached me for a light touch of a shilling. I noticed however, that she was very much the worse for booze (probably been drinking 'arf and 'arf) so I refused to give her any money and told her the best thing she could do was to go home and sober up. That made her real good and mad, and she made a counter attack with an empty beer bottle, with the intent of doing me bodily harm. But I was too quick for her, for it was a simple matter to disarm the old dame in her wobbly condition. Then she went home singing Tipperary.

Well, as I said once before, my sole object in being here was to get in a fit condition in order that I might rejoin the Battalion, which was in great need of reinforcements owing to the heavy casualties which they had suffered during the Vimy scrap on the ninth of April and later at Fresney on the third of May, 1917, when almost half the Battalion were put out of action. A monument has since been erected on the "Ridge" in memory of those who fell there.

One the tenth of May I went before the Medical Board for one more final examination, when I went through the regular ordeal --something like this:-- The M.O. speaking. "Your number?" (which I quoted for the Nth time). "Name?" Rank? Age and when wounded, etc., of which they already had a record. After which the following was tolerated: Say ninety-nine--cough--say Ah. Does your shoulder trouble you? Which I answered in the negative. That was a lie, but I wanted to get out of Seaford at all costs. Do you wish to rejoin your Battalion? I did, (there was no alternative apparently). All right, said the M.O. you can report tomorrow morning in full marching order. Next.

And so it was, on the eleventh of May and incidentally my nineteenth official birthday, that I again crossed the channel for the third time. And it was just as rough as ever.

Four or five days later I was back in my own company, eight months after I left. They were out for a month's rest and stationed at Berlin, which is some eight kilometers to the west of Lens.

It was during my sojourn here that I became intimately acquainted with a young fellow, about my own age, whom I adopted as my official side-kicker. He was a Dane and came to Canada just previous to the commencement of the War and enlisted in 1916, eventually being drafted to the second Battalion, which unit he stayed with until they were demobilised in April 1919. He was absolutely fearless in the "line" and went on several raiding parties across "No man's land" and never missed a single show that the Battalion took part in. He was slightly wounded once, but not badly enough to be sent down the line. He is now back in Canada and working at Ottawa, from which place I hear from him quite often. I should like to have a chat with him and discuss some of the good and bad times we had together. Carl was in my platoon, so that everywhere I went he was sure to go.

During our stay in Berlin we were never idle for there were always guards to do, and machine gun drill and inspection every morning. Then once a week we would attend the bath parade

which would be carried out at Bruay, about four kilometers away and the best baths we ever went to. Regular shower baths used by the miners, for it was a mining town. The miners were mostly old men and boys.

A great improvement had been made with reference to the Machine Gun Section. When I left there were only four colt guns in the Battalion, and these had been replaced by four Lewis Guns to each company, or sixteen to the Battalion. The extra guns, I can assure you, gave us a great deal more confidence. They played a great role in our ultimate victory over the enemy. Besides the Lewis guns there were a number of Vickers Maxim water-cooled guns and it was known as the Brigade Machine Gun Company.

I may as well give a description of some of the other fighting units. There was the light Trench Mortar Brigade. They handled the Stokes Gun, the shell of which was cylinder shaped about two feet long and very effective. Next in line was the heavy Trench Mortars which fired a projectile weighing half a ton and known to us as the Flying Pig, on account of its likeness to a porker when in the air. Then came the Artillery with from their eighteen pounders or Whiz Bangs up to and including the sixteen inch gun which was mounted on the railway. Each Battalion was also supplied with Mills Bombs and Rifle Grenades, which also were very effective. Then there were such useful articles as: Air-planes, Tanks, Motor Transport, Observation Balloons, Apparatus for the release of Poison Gas, Pigeons and Light Railways. They were all dependant on each other and each one doing their darndest to put the finishing touch to the Bosch.

Now isn't that a nice little collection of paraphernalia? And all used for the purpose of killing one another. How much better if all those efforts had been utilized in saving life instead of destroying it. And what is the ultimate result? Germany, within ten years, will be in a position to repeat the performance, if she so desires. The import of German goods into Britain and Canada has caused considerable unemployment. Our asylums are filled to overflowing and crime is on the increase. And now, let's get back to our billets in Berlin.

I must now tell you about the "Cootie" races which were held once a year. Only thoroughbred "Gray Backs" fully registered, were eligible to complete in these annual events. All "Cooties" taking part must be under two years old and a resident of the owners shirt for at least six months. The race was managed in this manner: six of the most lively "Cooties" would be selected from each shirt and lined up at the starting point. The shirts would be placed about twenty centimeters away. They're off---but they will soon be on



again, for they are all headed in one direction, towards the shirts. The first prize of "one De-Lousing Outfit" goes to the shirt that gets all the "Cooties" back first. Do you feel a bite? So do I.

All good things must come to an end. We were to leave Berlin the following day for a trip to the Lens sector. Here we found that Fritz was in one side of the town and we were in the other and a very unhealthy spot it was too. A busy mining town before the war, but now a mass of ruins. The front line was composed of cellars connected by short trenches, some of which contained beds, chairs, tables, etc., which the people had left behind in their hasty retreat.

Here, the regular routine was carried out--stand to during the night, ration parties, wiring parties who would repair breaks in the barbed wire entanglements in No Man's Land. And then snatch a little sleep during the daytime if it wasn't too hot or too cold. Firing would start at dusk and continue throughout the night till dawn appeared, mixed with a few "Pine-apples" and "Minnenwerfers" which would lop over at intervals. The latter could be easily distinguished by its red tail of burning fuse. Over and over it would turn, followed by a thud and then a familiar c-r-r-r-ump. No matter which way one looked there was the continual flash and rumble of the guns in every direction. At regular intervals "Very Lights" would sail upwards as a red streak and then burst into a dazzling white, illuminating the ground for hundreds of yards. The smoke from burned powder was sickening--I can almost smell it yet.

Talk about dirty tricks, Fritz had them all beat with this one: he would send over a few harmless shells containing a combination of tear and pepper gas which we were supposed to inhale freely, then when we had got to sneezing and coughing violently Mr. Hun would send over the real gas. That was duck soup for him because it was impossible for anyone to keep a mask on with an attack of the sneezes.

And so it would go on, each side waiting for the other to make a break. Six long days of this and then back to supports for another six days where we were sometimes able to have a wash and a shave if the water which we got from shell holes was not too dirty. From twelve to fourteen days and sometimes more for each and every trip which we made into the line. And during that time we would never take off our clothing or equipment and perhaps never wash our dirty faces. You may be able to form some opinion of how we looked after a trip in the "Line".

Supports was not, however, all milk and honey exactly, for every night we would be on a working party of some kind or

other such as--digging trenches, carrying ammunition, repairing the wire out in front or reinforcing the front line if necessary. We were like so many wild animals, working during the night and sleeping by day.

Needless to say, our main hobby was watching air fights between hostile aircraft and our own machines, which never failed to create a good deal of excitement, especially when an enemy plane was brought down, when the cheering would outclass that of a final game of hockey. Observation balloons also made excellent targets for the "Hun" planes, for no sooner would one be shot down, usually in flames, when another would be sent up, only to meet the same fate. The observers in most cases would make good their escape in parachutes. They would then be rewarded with six days leave for making a forced descent. I have seen some of the more daring airmen attack a balloon which was down on the ground, set it on fire and then fly back to their own lines upside down. Many of them, however, would be brought down before getting very far. We used to fire at them with our Lewis guns but I don't remember ever registering a fatal hit. A plane would have to be exceptionally low to be brought down in that manner.

An now we journeyed back to Lievin, which was about three kilometers from the front line, where we remained as reserve troops for four or five days, sometimes longer. I was indeed surprised to find a number of French people in this little town. They had returned after being driven out during the early part of the war by the German hordes who looted their homes and then destroyed them. Even then it was almost a daily occurrence to hear shells screeching into the village with the sickening c-r-r-ump of a "Five-nine" when another Froggie would bite the dust. And in the face of all that there was the odd Estaminet that was open for business, where "Vin Blanc" or "Eggs and chips" could be obtained for the nominal sum of two Francs per head.

Our next move was to Arras which was twenty kilometers to the south of Lens, an easy day's march for old soldiers like myself. The line in this sector in June 1917 was some eight or nine kilometers to the east of Champagne City, a nickname adopted by the Second Battalion on account of the vast quantities of sparkling waters which were found in almost every cellar. Needless to say it was sampled by almost every member in our outfit during our brief visits to that city. It was just like the others, a mass of ruins and very few civilians, if any, were living there at that time on account of the heavy shelling. It was just a little too much for them.

We made a couple of trips in there at that time with nothing out of the ordinary to report. Just waiting and watching.

The more trips I made the more I hated wars, till finally I actually dreaded the thought of even one more six-six-six, meaning six days front line, six days supports and six days reserve.

Out again for a two weeks rest at Aubigny on the Arras-St. Pol Road. During this period we attended the Corps sports held at Tincques on the first of July 1917, where a good time was enjoyed by all those able to attend. The main item on the program and which impressed me most, was the massed pipe bands of all the Highland Battalions in the Canadian Corps. Following that were the regular sports such as baseball, football, boxing, etc., and as a special added attraction, the famous "Dumbells" put on a show. It was the first time I had seen them in action on the stage. So, for that day only, all thoughts of the War were cast aside.

From Aubigny we went to Fresnicourt and then on to Grenay, three or four kilometers from Loos which was situated just to the north of Lens. Had I known what was in store for me there I might have got cold feet and turned back.

On or about the 15 of August, the Third brigade went "over" and captured "Hill 70" and a number of Prisoners and machine-guns, a strategic point of great military importance to the allies, because it commanded a large area of the surrounding country. For that reason the Germans had fortified it exceptionally well, in fact, it was one mass of "Pill Boxes" and deep dug-outs, constructed of cement and steel. But all those precautions failed under the terrific barrage from our guns.

On the following night we went in and relieved the Third brigade, who were in pretty bad shape, having lost heavily during and after the attack. But Hill 70 was ours now for keeps. Perhaps and perhaps not.

The Hill was subjected to a heavy bombardment throughout the day which had, strange to say, eased up a little by the time we had reached "supports". But evidently this was to be our unlucky night, for a few minutes later a "five-nine" landed amongst my platoon, No. 7, and put 13 of the boys out of action, three or four being killed. But that was only the start. Naturally that disorganized things for a few minutes. The Stretcher Bearers were left to attend the wounded while we went on to the front line, or I should say, all that remained of it, for it was practically demolished. It was no wonder that Fritz evacuated. No man could stand up under that fire.

It was about midnight when we finally found our respective positions in those parts of the trench which afforded the most protection. No easy task I can assure you on a pitch black night

such as that was. Things were still fairly quiet, with an occasional "Whiz Bang" and the monotonous rattle of machine guns. Nothing out of the ordinary though.

But an hour later, somewhere around one-thirty, the tide began to turn, when Fritz opened up with everything he had. Immediately the word was passed along to "stand to" and send up the S.O.S. which was a red light. Then our own artillery opened up with everything they had and between the two, there was hell let loose in several different languages. Never before or since had I been in a worse bombardment. Pretty soon the boys began to drop all round me, some killed, some wounded. My Lewis Gun was behaving splendidly. Any moment though, I expected to see it blown up and me with it, but fate said no.

This first attack was kept up for almost an hour. How anyone could live through such fire was beyond all human comprehension. Two more attempts were made that night but without success. Each one was as bad as the first.

By daybreak we presented a sorry looking company. Dead and wounded were lying everywhere, but by God's help we held out. When a check up was made, there were only seven of us remaining of No. 7 Platoon. What a night--could I ever forget it? Could anyone forget? I think not.

You will perhaps wonder what my feelings were, what emotions, if any, did I experience during an attack such as some of us lived through that night and on many other similar occasions. As a matter of fact, there was really very little time in which to think,--that was really left till after the show was over. The after-effects were as bad, if not worse than the actual thing. That was the time when men--strong in action--went limp with grief, not for themselves, but for their comrades, who at one time marched and joked beside them. Now they were cold and stiff and out of the game for all time, or perhaps they were horribly mutilated, sometimes beyond recognition. Then, and not before, some of us would show signs of breaking up. That was how it affected me.

That night we were reinforced by another Battalion, I forget which one it was. Anyway, they were pretty well geared up (not lit up) on learning of our little show the night before and were naturally curious to know what was in store for them. However, Fritz was more amiable that night. He must have decided to let us keep Hill 70, for a while at least, as he made no further attempt to re-capture it until March 21, 1918, when he made his spring Offensive, and almost won the War, but not quite.

The following night we went out and in to billets at

Bouvigny, where we deloused, bathed, reinforced, drank "Vin Blink", visited the paymaster and then played Crown and Anchor till we were broke.

It was here that I received my first and only stripe, when I was promoted to what was then known as "Lance Corporal" in charge of the Machine Gun Section, and incidentally the scapegoat for all the other N.C.Os. and officers. For this reason: if there was any special duty to be performed the platoon Officers would tell the Sergeant. He would tell the Corporal who would pass it on to the Lance Corporal who would be responsible for it and make it his business to see that the order was carried out. If he failed, it was nothing less than Court Martial and perhaps shot at sunrise.

For the next two months we operated in and around Lens, where we made trips to the following places: Avion, Mericourt, Fresnoy, which is to the east of Vimy, Oppy and south to Arras. The first Canadian Divisions section from May 1917 till October 1917 was between Hill 70 to the North, and Arras on the South, a distance of approximately 20 miles.

During that time nothing of any importance happened, just the regular six-six-six, or in other words--in, out and rest. It was seldom that we billeted in the same village twice, always a different one--ever on the move. Is it any wonder that so many of the boys, including myself, were restless for some considerable time after the War.

The latter part of October the Battalion went back to Ypres, where they took part in the Passchendaele show on the 6th of November, 1917. However, I did not take in that show on account of an attack of trench-feet which I contracted in the vicinity of Gouchey when on outpost duty, where four of us remained for three days and nights in the ruins of what was once a house, a hundred yards or so in front of the line, or "No Man's Land" to be exact, where one false move during the daytime spelled R.I.P. There we were practically isolated from the rest of the Battalion except for a nightly visit with sox, rations and rum. Our duty was to surprise enemy raiding parties with the aid of a Lewis Gun and Mills Bombs.

Passchendaele was, without exception, one of the toughest engagements that the Canadian Corps ever went through, on account of the conditions under which they fought. The battlefield was just one sea of mud and water, which made it exceptionally difficult for all ranks, especially the Artillery Corps. In many cases the guns and horses would disappear entirely where they were swallowed up in the slimy ooze of Flanders. The Infantry fairly wallowed in it, for there were no trenches, just shell holes full of water, where

many wounded were drowned--unable to get out. So in order of merit I will put Passchendaele at the top of the class, with the Somme second, Hill 70 third, Cambrai fourth and Amiens fifth, they being the five most important engagements that the Canadians took part in during 1917 and 1918.

The Battalion returned to the Lens front early in December where I rejoined them having completely recovered from my attack of Trench feet. This particular foot disease was caused by a continual spasm of wet feet which swell to enormous proportions and are very painful, and in some cases amputation was necessary.

Fortunately, we spent Christmas out of the Line that year, at Houdain, some eighteen kilometres from Lens. And a very merry one it was too, taking all things into consideration. Parcels from home were an important factor in the success of our Yuletide festivities. Without them it would have been a cruel, empty world for us. And if anyone thinks they were not appreciated, well--they have another think coming. For the mail was the only thing we boys had to look forward to, except of course, pay-day. That puts me in mind of a certain parcel I received from home. It contained a variety of articles, including a large cake, a pound of butter, candy, peanut butter, a pair of socks, etc. You can imagine my disappointment on opening it to find the butter was in a very decomposed condition, and had spread to the cake and other things, so that they were saturated with rotten butter. It was lucky for me that I had a gas-mask. However, that was the only one that did not arrive in first-class condition. And in concluding, I want to extend, on behalf of the boys, a hearty vote of thanks to all the Mothers, Sisters, Sweethearts, Wives and others who were responsible for the many parcels that were sent to us while in France. Their efforts will never be forgotten.

In January 1918 we made a trip, the usual six-six-six at Avion, just to the south of Lens. It was snowing during the trip in, a difficult task I can assure you, and the coldest weather we ever had. I have given you some of the hot spots we were in, and now I will name Avion as the quietest part of the line we had the pleasure of camping on. During the whole time there, there were not more than half a dozen "Whiz Bangs" fired from either side and very little Machine Gun fire if any. For this reason, between our lines and Fritz was a small lake, therefore it was practically impossible for either side to pull off any dirty work. Except for the cold weather it was a regular picnic compared with other places.

It was in February that I received the good news to pack up for ten days leave. I was in the line at the time and the way I went out was not slow. A complete change of clothing, a bath, a visit to the paymaster who gave me L20. and a transportation

ticket to Bradford, and then on the train to Le Havre. Once more across the stormy channel to Portsmouth where I boarded a train to my final destination, where I sponged on a flock of my relatives, who treated me royally. One morning I awoke to find that one of my little "Gray Back" friends was also enjoying the hospitality of my Aunt, having left my company for that of the bed. Very loyal of him to stay with me like that, but I couldn't possibly go away leaving a flock of livestock behind, so I did the only possible thing under the circumstances and murdered the little brute. Then I searched everything thoroughly for twenty minutes or more, but failed to find any of this brothers or sisters. That eased my mind a whole lot.

I enjoyed my stay in Bradford immensely. It was just one glorious week of events, but time went by altogether too quickly. For it seemed that no sooner had I got there when it was time to go back, and back I went.

I rejoined the battalion at an old familiar spot, Hill 70 a few days previous to the final German offensive, on the 21st day of March, 1918 and incidentally the first day of Spring. This was in the form of a general attack on the whole Western front.

Starting at four in the morning, Fritz put over the worst I had ever experienced. Words fail to describe the severity of that bombardment, which lasted for over an hour and then was followed by Fritz himself, when he made considerable headway along most parts of the line. The Canadian sector however, remained practically intact. It was true that they penetrated behind our lines, but none of them ever got back alive. We lost quite a few men that morning but nothing compared to the German losses.

That particular German offensive was an exceedingly close shave for the Allies, the seriousness of which reached alarming proportions and caused the Higher Ups some considerable anxiety. Why they did not keep on going I can't say. There was very little to stop them in some places, especially Amiens and Armentieres, where they penetrated to a depth of some twenty kilometers. It was not long, however, except for a few local engagements, before conditions went back to normal, and Fritz decided that any further attacks were useless. That was their final effort which ended in failure.

It was quite evident now from the tactics we were going through that preparations were under way for another big show in the opposite direction, for during the next four months, that is, between trips while out on rest, we would rehearse day after day. Regular open warfare with tanks and everything. Through the Frenchmen's wheat field we would go, trampling the grain under

foot till there was nothing left to harvest. Poor Froggies, their troubles were many. But we had to get on with the war, nothing else but.

This business went on till about the middle of July 1918. By that time we were pretty well fed up with attacking haystacks and windmills. It all seemed so un-necessary to us who had been through the same thing to often. On the contrary, it came in very useful when a little later on we came in contact with conditions such as we had been rehearsing , even to the extent of wheat fields, windmills and haystacks.

And now the Canadian Corps moved from the Lens Sector to the Amiens front sixty or seventy Kilometres to the South. The trek was made in easy stages, so that it was a week or ten days before we reached our final destination just South of the once picturesque city of Amiens. Fortunately it had escaped any serious destruction previous to the final German offensive in March, when the enemy came within 10 kilometres of the city.

My assumption regarding the Big show proved to be correct, for on August 8th the Battalion "jumped off" shortly after daybreak at Boves Wood just to the South of Amiens following a terrific bombardment by our Artillery. The attack was carried out just like any ordinary field manoeuvres, tanks first with us fellows right on their tails. For the first few hours considerable resistance was met with, machine guns were everywhere, but, fortunately for us the Tanks soon put them out of action, provided of course, that an anti-tank shell did not get them first. Without the tanks I'm afraid it would have been a hopeless task. Certainly there would have been many more casualties.

Everywhere showed signs of the enemies hasty retreat. In many places fires were still burning and breakfast lay untouched at their different headquarters, which proved beyond a doubt that our attack had been a complete surprise.

At three o'clock in the afternoon we received orders to stand fast and "dig in". It seemed to me that we had advanced at least twenty miles. How far it really was though I cannot positively say, possibly not more than twelve kilos. At any rate it was plenty far enough to suit me for one day. So we "dug in" and made ourselves as comfortable as was possible under the prevailing conditions and just waited for something to happen. We may have parked on top of a mine for all we knew. However, I was not greatly concerned about that, there was something more important going on in my mind and that was, whether our rations would find us all right, for we were pretty well "all in" and needed nourishment in the worst way. My fears in that direction were soon



scattered to the four winds. We were not going to die from starvation, not that night anyway, for shortly after dusk our inside ammunition was relayed to us in the usual manner.

Taking all things into consideration, our casualties for that first day were comparatively light. Other parts of the line, however, were not so fortunate as we. Many Battalions met with considerable resistance with the resultant heavy loss among their ranks. Nothing of any importance happened that night.

The following day zero hour was set for one-thirty in the afternoon when the slow and deliberate attack was continued and the "jumping off" place for the 2nd Battalion was at Gentiles Wood. Heinie had evidently recovered sufficiently to round up some of his Artillery judging by the barrage that greeted us. He sent over a varied assortment of pepper gas, tear gas, poison gas, machine guns, whiz bangs and "five nines". And by the careless manner in which those things were falling in our midst, it was quite evident that we were going to spend a very merry afternoon. No sooner had we got nicely under way the boys began to drop, and yet, no matter how many got knocked out there were always the lucky few to carry on to the end.

Poor old Lt. Ferguson, absolutely fearless and exceedingly popular among the boys of number two Company. I can picture him now as he was that day, so unlike his natural self. He had a sort of dejected look about him and told us that he was going to "get his" that day. How he knew is something we don't quite understand. He got it all right, a piece of shrapnel through the head. I was with him at the time, just another c-r-r-ump and he slumped to the ground--dying instantly.

And so it was for the remainder of that afternoon--just one after another--many of them out for good; some writhing in agony, perhaps breathing their last, with the more fortunate ones able to navigate back to some field dressing station. All tremendously eager with the thought of a possible "trip to Blighty" to spur them on.

Our objective that day was the Canal Du Nord which we reached just before dusk and where we made our headquarters for the night. The Canal bank afforded us some protection from machine guns and left us quite open behind where "five nines" lopped intermittently throughout the night. S.O.S. signals in the form of red Very Lights were very much in evidence on our right and left followed by the usual periods of artillery fire from both sides. That night I might say was anything but quiet. Everyone was naturally on edge so that the least disturbance across the Canal was followed by numerous red Very Lights, to which the Artillery

answered with eagerness, provided they had the ammunition.

We remained at the Canal for three or four days. Other Battalions to our right and left having met with considerably more resistance than we, were consequently much further to the rear, and naturally put in a somewhat unhealthy position in so much that we were in danger of being cut off from the rear. The heavy Artillery and transport divisions were thus given an opportunity to move up to their normal positions.

It was during our sojourn at the Canal Du Nord that I decided to relinquish my solitary stripe which allowed me to act in the capacity of Lance Corporal. I had a hunch that if I stayed with the "suicide club" much longer that I was due for an "R.I.P." so I was duly transferred from the Machine Gun Section which I had steered through many major engagements and became a Company Runner with my best friend (financially and socially) Carl the Dane. It was a runner's duty to keep up communication between Company and Battalion Headquarters, especially when there was a show on before telephone lines had been laid. But a runner did not always run. Sometimes he was obliged to crawl on all fours through mud and slime, for it was his lot to get the message through regardless of what the existing conditions might be. However, it was a welcome change to what I had been accustomed to. Nor more "standing to" all night. We were able to enjoy better billets, perhaps to the extent of the then famous wire beds, a luxury not experienced in the front line. So that with Carl's extras we had a right merry time--sometimes.

And now I will tell of the darkest chapter of my four years experience in the ranks of His Majesty's Forces, and one which I could not positively boast of.

It was customary for any one who had been in the line continually for several months to be left out one trip "on rest". I was not surprised then to know that I was detailed off for a so-called rest when the Battalion went in at Cambrai during the latter part of August.

Ten of us all told were left out on this particular occasion and naturally thought ourselves quite fortunate, knowing that we were to miss one of the biggest shows of the season. Cambrai proved to be one of the toughest objectives ever attempted especially Bourlon Wood, the 2nd Battalion objective, more popularly known as the "Hindenburg Line" sector.

During our rest period we were given instructions in a certain drill which was entirely new to me. For several days we went through the same performance. It was a sort of target prac-

tice and guard of honor combined. However, it was not for us to ask questions, they were orders and we had to obey orders. Finally we were pronounced O.K. for whatever our task might be and the Officer in charge politely informed us that the following morning at dawn we were to act in the capacity of an official firing party when one of our own men was to be shot for desertion. He was Court martialed on two previous occasions and was let off on some pretext or other. The third time he met his doom and the execution was carried out in this manner. The prisoner, a man of about thirty-five years of age, was placed in a chair, tied and blindfolded, with a piece of paper over his heart. The rifles, previously loaded with half live rounds and half blanks were placed on the ground about thirty feet away. The firing party then marched in, for it took place in an old farm yard. No verbal command was given, the party acting on the blast of the Officer's whistle. We were first reminded that failure to carry out instructions would mean the same fate. In the event of no one hitting the mark the Officer in charge would carry out the ghastly deed. As I remember it the whole thing only took about a minute. In fact, it seems more like a dream now than something that really happened more than ten years ago. It is with some effort that I recall the facts that transpired on that eventful August morning. Not being murderously inclined, it can be readily understood when I say that it was some time before I could get the disagreeable subject off my mind. Such is war. The ways of mankind are strange. At war, the penalty for not killing is death, in peace, the penalty for killing is death.

The downfall and ultimate capture of the Huns last defences known as the Drocourt-Quent Line or Hindenburg Line was the decisive turning point of the World War, which spelled defeat for the German army and victory for the Allies. Beyond that point they were unable to make any considerable resistance. So they did the next best thing when they packed up and made tracks for the Fatherland like whipped dogs with their tails between their legs.

The liberated French people who had been held prisoners for more than four years, were overwhelmed with joy at the sight of the Canadian troops. They shouted triumphantly "Vive les Canadiens" as they offered us what little wine they had on hand. I am reminded at this time of a most amusing incident that happened to me during the advance. An old Frenchman, overjoyed at the sight of our troops, came up to me and embraced me in true French style, first one side and then the other. It so happened that said Frenchman was wearing an elegant beard, also, he was chewing tobacco and the juice thereof flowed freely down his facial adornment. Otherwise I enjoyed the salutation immensely. Those were memorable days I can assure you.

The last three months of those hectic years were banner ones for the Allies. In fact they were just one glorious succession of successful engagements which finally shattered the already demoralized German army, which had no other choice than admit defeat, so that their wild dreams of world power were shattered. For how long, I would not venture to say, but I suppose so long as one nation is stronger than another there will always be wars. Such has been the experience throughout the ages. Certainly no same-minded person would wish for a repetition of what has taken place during those four years of world strife.

When hostilities finally ceased the 2nd Battalion was enjoying a well-earned rest at Reilulay, a few kilos to the north of Cambrai. It was my privilege as company runner on the morning of November 11th, to convey to Number Two Company the official announcement that there would be a cessation of hostilities at eleven o'clock that morning. It was certainly a choice bit of news. Nevertheless, it did not come to us as a complete surprise; we had been expecting it for some time and that was not the end for us. In fact, it was six months later before we received our official walking ticket.

A few days later we were again on the move, but this time under different circumstances. It was not long before we passed through Valenciennes and then on to Mons and incidentally where the War commenced and also where it finished. For days and days we marched right through Belgium till we finally reached the so-called land of hate. Odd though it may seem, they did not, as was expected sing their famous "Hymn of Hate". The German people proved to be just the opposite, no doubt from force of habit from catering to their own troops, who I understand demanded everything they possessed. From my personal observations regarding the attitude of the German people they were all might glad to see us, being happy in the knowledge that the whole thing was over. They were most hospitable and even placed their houses and effects at our disposal, which we naturally made good use of. Many happy evenings were thus spent while they related their experiences during some of our bombing raids, which were evidently very effective. I had occasion to speak with an ex-German Officer who spoke English perfectly. He described our Artillery fire during the big drive. He said it was terrible, murderous,--- in fact it was nothing less than a miracle how any of them ever got out alive.

The retreating Huns were only two days ahead of us and the roads en route bore mute evidence of the awful conditions they were in. Their horses, hundreds of them, lay dead along the roads and in many instances the flesh had been cut away and I suppose devoured by the shattered remnants of a once proud and victorious army. Why should mankind suffer thus for a few selfish maniacs?

In a heavy downpour of rain we crossed the Rhine River at Cologne on Friday December the 13th, after marching across Belgium and part of Germany for a distance of four hundred kilometres, where we saw many strange things and equally strange people. Quite an education, this business of war, I can assure you. Staying on at Cologne that night, we left the following morning for a point thirty kilos the other side of the Rhine, where a series of outposts were established.

A very merry Christmas was enjoyed by all ranks in that little German village, where we dined on black bread, beer, and cheap cigars. I remember a rather amusing incident that happened during the yuletide festivities, when the company Commander went forth to purchase a pig for number Two Company. Now grunt meat was evidently very scarce at that time, so that it required some effort before a suitable porker was located at a nearby farm house. The Major enquired of the farmer how much a pig of that calibre was worth, to which he replied sixty marks, which was a prohibitive price after just winning the War. Sixty marks "Für ein cline swine" was an outrageous price. Anyway the Major thought that was far too much and offered him thirty marks. "Gott in himmel" the old farmer could not think of letting it go for such a paltry sum.

However, after much cursing in German he decided to let the pig go.

During our two months stay in Germany as part of the Army of Occupation, I saw many interesting things. And although Cologne was "out of bounds" to all troops, I managed to give it the "once over" on several different occasions. To admit that disregard of "Rules and Regulations" at the time would have seen me up for "Orderly Room".

Carl and I saw to it that we had a fairly good billet together with an elderly couple of moderate means, at least they gave us that impression. They had two charming daughters and one son who was killed in action. And the irony of it was that Carl and I slept in his bed. Either one of us might have been responsible for his death, who knows? That thought alone was sufficient to produce some sleepless nights for a time. I could surely sympathize with that woman when she told me, with tears in her eyes, about "her boy". She was only one out of many thousands. Apparently she had no ill-feeling towards us, for we were made to feel quite at home during our short stay with them. In the evenings we usually contented ourselves with learning their language, the girls acting as teachers.

Two months slipped by and the novelty of the whole thing had by that time worn off, so that most of us were quite fed up with

the monotony of doing nothing, so it was with some relief when we received orders to pack up and hit for home.

The return journey was made by train, which naturally pleased all ranks immensely. Of course the trip required much detouring because few of the lines had been put in bad shape, especially in the vicinity of the battle area. On our way back the train passed through a part which, at one time the second Battalion had occupied as their front line, but it was with some difficulty that it was recognized as such. Everywhere seemed so peaceful then, far different to what we had been accustomed to. That the trains were slow did not worry us the least bit, in fact, nothing mattered so long as we were on our way back to the land of the Maple Leaf and home.

Back in England again the Battalion was sent to Bramshott Camp where we stayed for two weeks previous to sailing for Canada on the S.S. Olympic. Bramshott, by the way, was the first place I struck on landing in England and the last on leaving it.

Needless to say, we had a grand old time crossing the pond. Arriving in Halifax we were given a "Five Spot" and incidentally the first Canadian money I had been for four years. Those green-backs certainly were a most welcome sight.

From Halifax the Battalion proceeded to its original headquarters at Kingston, Ont., where we were finally discharged from active service, forever, I hope, after which we proceeded to our different home town from where we had recruited.

And in concluding, I can only thank God for guiding me through to the end, and thus enabling me to experience all the joys of a never-to-be-forgotten home-coming.

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